

## Isaiah 65:1-9

*The prophet announces God's impatience. The people's self-absorption is idolatry, and images of practices that displease God fill this reading. Like a vintner who crushes the grape to release the wine, God will use Israel's exile to establish a new community of the faithful.*

<sup>1</sup>I was ready to be sought out by those who did not ask,  
to be found by those who did not seek me.

I said, "Here I am, here I am,"  
to a nation that did not call on my name.

<sup>2</sup>I held out my hands all day long  
to a rebellious people,  
who walk in a way that is not good,  
following their own devices;

<sup>3</sup>a people who provoke me  
to my face continually,  
sacrificing in gardens  
and offering incense on bricks;

<sup>4</sup>who sit inside tombs,  
and spend the night in secret places;  
who eat swine's flesh,  
with broth of abominable things in their vessels;

<sup>5</sup>who say, "Keep to yourself,  
do not come near me, for I am too holy for you."

These are a smoke in my nostrils,  
a fire that burns all day long.

<sup>6</sup>See, it is written before me:

I will not keep silent, but I will repay;

I will indeed repay into their laps

<sup>7</sup>their iniquities and their ancestors' iniquities together,  
says the LORD;

because they offered incense on the mountains  
and reviled me on the hills,

I will measure into their laps  
full payment for their actions.

<sup>8</sup>Thus says the LORD:

As the wine is found in the cluster,  
and they say, "Do not destroy it,  
for there is a blessing in it,"

so I will do for my servants' sake,  
and not destroy them all.

<sup>9</sup>I will bring forth descendants from Jacob,  
and from Judah inheritors of my mountains;  
my chosen shall inherit it,  
and my servants shall settle there.

## Galatians 3:23-29

*For Paul, baptism is a powerful bond that unites people not only with God but with other believers. Those who call themselves children of God experience a transformation that removes prejudices of race, social class, or gender in favor of true unity in Christ.*

<sup>23</sup>Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. <sup>24</sup>Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup>But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, <sup>26</sup>for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. <sup>27</sup>As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. <sup>28</sup>There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup>And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.



## Luke 8:26-39

*Jesus' mission includes foreigners and his authority extends to the casting out of demons. Some who witness Jesus' work are seized with confusion and fear, but the man who was healed is commissioned to give testimony to God's mercy and power.*

<sup>26</sup>Then [Jesus and his disciples] arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. <sup>27</sup>As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. <sup>28</sup>When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me" —<sup>29</sup>for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) <sup>30</sup>Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" He said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. <sup>31</sup>They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

<sup>32</sup>Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. <sup>33</sup>Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

<sup>34</sup>When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. <sup>35</sup>Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. <sup>36</sup>Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. <sup>37</sup>Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. <sup>38</sup>The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, <sup>39</sup>"Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

